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POLITICAL CONSULTATION

I. Introduction

1. Objectives. Our purposes in carrying forward political consultation should be the same as those in prosecuting other aspects of our European policy:

(a) to enhance the prospects for European unification;

(b) to strengthen the trans-Atlantic partnership.

2. Background. Our efforts to promote these objectives through political consultation should take account of several factors:

(a) Having regained their self-confidence and sense of dynamic growth, the Europeans are becoming more assertive, and more aggressively insistent on being consulted and treated as equals.

(b) On the other hand, the Europeans do not yet conceive of their interests and obligations in as broad terms as the United States does; nor are their parliaments and peoples fully prepared for the costs, risks, and political commitment that is now required for the exercise of world power and responsibility. It will take time for them thus to transcend their heavy focus on intra-European concerns.

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(c) The key to this evolution will be the development of an effective capacity on the part of Europe for increasingly joint decisions on political and security matters, which would dramatize the total impact of European strength on the world scene. This capacity does not now exist. It will take time to develop. Until it develops, individual European countries will tend to feel that their individual efforts are too small, at best, to justify much added sacrifice.

(d) As a result, we are caught up in a vicious circle. The enormous de facto responsibility we bear, causes us to act in a highly unilateral way. Such actions, in turn, encourage the Europeans to limit their burdens and liabilities, and build up the kind of resentment de Gaulle seeks to exploit for his own purposes. Thus Europe's new self-confidence and sense of growing power in the political and security fields is expressed negatively in irritation over lack of US understanding, rather than positively in constructive action.

3. General Approach. To break out of this vicious circle will demand changes in attitudes, procedures, and institutions, designed to:

(a) strengthen the partnership by exposing European countries to those kinds of Atlantic consultation likely to enhance their willingness to associate themselves with the

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US in playing a larger role on the world scene;

(b) run with the grain of European integration, by encouraging the Europeans to concert closely with each other on terms that do not include a veto by any one country, at the same time as they work more intimately with the US;

(c) outflank de Gaulle's efforts to frustrate both partnership and integration, by showing Europe that it can achieve a serious international role without either succumbing to French domination or divorcing itself from the US.

Means of acting to these ends are discussed below.

II. Proposal

4. Attitudes. In order to build an environment of increased European responsibility, the US Government should decide to make political consultation with its European allies more effective - accepting the risks of dilution and delay that this may involve.

To this end, the President should advise all policy-making areas of the Government of his desire that, except in unusual circumstances, the US consult with its European allies before making decisions which directly affect their vital interests.

Exceptions to this rule should require specific approval of the President - on the recommendation of the Secretary of State,

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State, upon a showing that failure to make such an exception would directly endanger major US interests. Inconvenience or a presumed marginal advantage of unilateral action to the US is not sufficient justification for proceeding without prior consultation.

3. Procedures. We should move forward in political consultation on a wide variety of fronts, using and adapting existing instruments to the maximum extent possible. Instead of placing primary emphasis on any single instrument or procedure, we should employ a number of different means - each suited to a particular need.

(a) NATO Ad Hoc Groups. We should apply in NATO the lesson that we learned in OECD: that productive consultation can only take place between officials who occupy policy-making positions in governments. We should seek, through this means, to bring together governments with serious interests in major regions outside NATO, in order to identify areas of common interest and outline possible lines of common or concerted action. Responsible officials at the U.S. Assistant Secretary level should meet frequently, on an ad hoc basis, in small groups representing countries with direct responsibilities relating to the

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to the issue in question, and under conditions as informal and conducive to free discussion as possible. Whenever possible, these meetings should take place under NATO auspices. In any event, except under special circumstances, the NAC should be kept informed by the participating governments of the substantive results of the meetings.

(b) Quadripartite Group on Berlin. We should maintain the vitality of the Quadripartite Ambassadorial Group in Washington for the handling of Berlin political and military contingency planning. We should continue to consider whether the Group might later be used for wider purposes.

(c) APAG. The work of the Atlantic Planning Advisory Group should be carried forward, as a means of scanning the horizon and exploring, on an informal basis, what specific problems might lend themselves to serious consultation, at operationally responsible levels. These APAG might well be the means of defining the subjects to receive primary emphasis in the process of informal consultation outlined under (a) above.

(d) NAC. We should undertake, more systematically, briefings of the North Atlantic Council on issues which might lead to crises, e.g., the situation in Cuba, the implications

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of Chinese Communist nuclear prospects for NATO, the situation and prospects in Laos and Vietnam, etc. These briefings would help to set the stage for wider allied understanding of courses of action that we might later propose or undertake.

(e) Ministerial Meetings. We should try to make Ministerial Meetings more of a working operation. The agenda should be defined in precise and operational terms, and should be well prepared beforehand. The issues for resolution should be narrowed by prior consultation, to the maximum extent feasible. Formal speeches and social activities should, by advance agreement, be restricted to a minimum.

(f) Communication. A massive improvement of communications between heads of at least the major Atlantic governments is necessary, if these governments are to consult effectively - particularly at times of crisis. Secondarily, communications to the NATO headquarters in Paris should be strengthened. Dr. Weisner's office should be directed to suggest an imaginative program to this end, making use of the most modern electronic devices available. The US should discuss with its allies the need for far-ranging measures, recognizing that the cost may be significant.

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(g) Aid. With the change of leadership in DAC, we should seek to develop arrangements which would provide DAC with a sense of the vital political interests which are at stake in their consideration of foreign aid needs and actions.' This is essential to obtaining needed aid contributions from major NATO nations.

6. Institutions.

(a) NATO Executive Committee. I shall not discuss here the opportunities that would be created by setting up a Members' Committee to manage the MLF. Such a Committee, while initially concerning itself with management and use of the Force, would inevitably end by getting into political issues of great moment, - if only because of its responsibility for determining degrees of MLF alert in periods of tension. But it seems premature to try to determine the Committee's activities in this respect before the MLF has been set up and without more extensive knowledge of the intended MLF operation. We should be aware, however, in reviewing the question of political consultation, that such a Committee might eventually evolve into a NATO Executive Committee, which would concern itself with the broad question of crisis management, - especially if France eventually joined the MLF. Indeed, evolution from an MLF Committee

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Committee is probably the only way a NATO Executive Committee is likely to be set up; resistance of the smaller countries is, in other circumstances, likely to be determining. We should also be aware that NATO consultation about crisis management will continue to suffer from grave deficiencies, given the disparate responsibilities of different NATO countries, unless some instrument approximating an Executive Committee is eventually established.

(b) NATO Defense and Political Ministers. We should press ahead, at an appropriate time, with the proposal, which I gather the Secretaries of State and Defense have discussed and viewed with favor, for creating the posts of Defense Minister and Political Minister on the NATO international staff. Such a reorganization would strengthen the process of Atlantic consultation about politico-military problems of common allied interest.

Appointment of a Defense Minister would help to give European countries a feeling that they were actually involved in the process of strategic policy formulation and coordination. He would be responsible for those functions which, in a national government, would normally be performed by civilian authority and which are now undertaken in NATO by a US

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officer on active duty and in the US chain of command (SACEUR/CINCEUR). These functions would include: (i) making recommendations to the Ministerial Council about alliance-wide strategy and force goals; (ii) negotiating about programs to fulfill these goals, after Ministerial Council action, with national governments; and (iii) providing strategic advice to the NAC, as required.

The Political Minister would be responsible for seeing that the processes of consultation described in paragraph 5, above, were carried out with optimum effectiveness. He would try to coordinate these diverse approaches so as to ensure that all problems of major interest to the alliance were adequately covered.

If these two new posts were created, the present position of Secretary General (who would, like a permanent undersecretary in a European government, be responsible to the Defense and Political Ministers for administration of the International Staff) could be supplemented by that of a Chairman of the Ministerial Council - who should be an elder statesman of recognized international stature like Lord Franks - and who could speak authoritatively to governments, including his own. Such a Chairman would preside over meetings of the Ministerial

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Ministerial Council, and of the NAC if he wished; his ability to formulate and reaffirm the common needs and purposes which transcend separate members' parochial interests would be particularly helpful in the stage ahead, which may be marked by greater strains and conflicts within the European and Atlantic Communities.

An appropriate time for broaching this scheme with our allies may arise when the time approaches to replace Dr. Stikker. Not the least advantage of this arrangement would be the opportunity which it offered - through creation of two new posts - to afford major European powers more adequate representation on the International Staff.

III. Conclusion

7. Plan for Diplomatic Action. The Secretary of State should be asked to submit a plan for high level exploratory discussions, embracing the conception of next steps in the consultation process set forth in para 5, with our major European allies, including France, plus key smaller nations. This plan should be available for discussion with Dr. Stikker, as appropriate, when he arrives in early March.

8. Intra-European Consultation. We should make clear, in the course of discussions about political consultation with

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with our allies, that we are prepared to move toward even more intimate forms of political consultation if and as Europe grows in strength and unity. The idea of Europe acting as a unit in its dealings with the US has strong attraction for many Europeans. We should indicate that this remains a US objective - to be fulfilled as Europe acquires the ability to act as an entity. As tangible evidence of this US view, we would welcome any effort by the European countries to undertake more intimate consultation now about defense and political matters, e.g., through the WEU.

9. Wise Men. After these initial discussions with our allies, we may wish to propose that a Wise Man or Men be appointed by the Secretary General or the Council, to review the whole question of political consultation and make appropriate proposals. Given the contentious nature of the subject, some such objective review may be an essential basis for later action.

10. Manner and Style. Almost as important as the method and substance of political consultation is the manner in which it is conducted. This reflection is also applicable to diplomatic

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diplomatic negotiation. Impatience to secure speedy results before having established reasonable and firm premises is equally unconducive to productive consideration of successful negotiation.

In both these categories, which occasionally become inseparable, or else follow in natural sequence, undue haste often breeds confusion.

Our diplomatic manner may expose us to rebuffs and misunderstandings, if commonly accepted procedures are not followed. For example, it is customary for Chiefs of State to communicate with Chiefs of State - it is not acceptable, except under unusual circumstances, or in eccentric cases like that of Chancellor Adenauer, for Ambassadors to deliver messages from the State Department, or to negotiate directly on their own initiative, with Chiefs of State.

The established routine in diplomatic dealings is for an Ambassador to make representations to the Foreign Minister, or to another high official in the Foreign Office of the country to which he is accredited. All too often, instructions looking to this end are issued with an injunction to elicit an immediate answer.

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There are emergencies justifying so peremptory a request, but they are minor in number.

On matters not really requiring a negotiation or consultation, at superior level, it would be well to refrain from indicating great urgency. I have seen many telegrams suggesting that where, due to differences in time, the contents, if literally interpreted, would require an American Ambassador to surprise a Foreign Secretary in his bed, with the announcement of comparative trivialities. Talleyrand's injunction: "Surtout, pas trop de zèle" is always worth bearing in mind.

The same observations apply to style. Whether in consultation or negotiation, in writing or in speech, a certain attempt at elegance should be made. Ordinary courtesy may usually suffice, but there are times and periods, where a meticulous regard for delicate foreign sensibilities imperatively demands peculiar care lest they be unnecessarily exacerbated or wounded. Even in duels between individuals, when the intent is to kill, the code duello requires an unruffled manner and style on the part of the participants.

Bad manners and bad style in other nations are better ignored than imitated. This is especially true when a Great Power

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Power confronts a lesser one which is ready to fancy offense where none is intended.

The activities of our Government are so ramified, and the consequent pressures on our officials so nearly intolerable, that the above plea for calm, courtesy, and consideration may appear difficult of fulfillment. Yet if a crude conformity of style can be imposed upon the bulky contents of weekly magazines, it should not be impracticable for a distinctive national tone to characterize our diplomatic operations at home and abroad. At least, the desire to do so might inspire the attempt.

In summary, satisfactory political consultation requires attention both to substance and form. Subetance varies, form should be consistently good.

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